

NEW YORK ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS, INC.



PROVIDING TODAY...

... PROTECTING TOMORROW

FYI...

NYACD NEWSLETTER • AUGUST 2007

FROM THE PRESIDENT

As some of you may know, I changed jobs at the beginning of this year. I went from working for a non-profit to working for a municipality; from being outside of politics, so to speak, to being inside, looking out. Throughout both a career and volunteer span in my life, I have come to realize that truth and good work may not always be rewarded. It is a fact and I know that many of you district directors who are county legislators know this all too well. Sometimes it is the person who can tell the most convincing story and that story can be fiction, as long as others believe what you have to say. I can say however, that those who I have had the opportunity to work with throughout the Soil and Water family generally reward those who work hard and work together for a common cause. Outside of that realm, there are different stories to be told. We need only to look at the newspapers to see what is happening on the national as well as the state levels.

Okay, I am sure you are asking yourself at this moment, "What is she babbling about?" Well, it is this. We stand at the threshold of several important junctions in the future of soil and water conservation districts and how they have operated for many years in the past. We have before us a reorganization of the NRCS. A revamping that will affect a great many districts directly or indirectly. Have you been told everything? Have you discussed this at your district board levels? What will the next steps be? How should Soil and Water Districts respond? What are the facts? Can you answer these questions? Have you thought about how the plan will affect your districts and the federal programs in the State?

Let's move onto the Federal farm bill and what shape and formula will be used in the coming legislation. There are reports out there now that the USDA has paid out funds in the millions over the last several years to people who are no longer alive, or not in the business they were originally given the money for. What affect will this have on the federal programs? What affect will proposed legislation have on the future of your Soil and Water Conservation District?

We better not forget the state level either. What about the new rules for the additional funds. Is your district prepared to be able to qualify and secure the additional dollars? Do you understand what the requirements will be?

Latest announcement on Governor Spitzer's recognition of the importance for the Environmental Protection Fund. Great News right? Where will the Soil and Water Conservation Districts be? What type of projects and programs will the Soil and Water Conservation Districts be involved with in the near future for those dollars?

It is important for each of you as district directors, district officials/staff and partners to realize what is fact, what will the outcome be and where do we collectively need to be in order to be on the winning side. I will repeat what I have said in past articles. It is important that we all stand together and work hard to make sure that the Soil and Water Conservation Districts survive and grow. This can continue past the difficult times. Together we will be victorious.

Linda Coffin, President, NYACD

NYACD MISSION:

The NYACD provides leadership in the wise use of soil, water and related natural resources. This direction is provided through programs that support member Soil and Water Conservation District's scientific, marketing/outreach and financial work and that encourage networking and building alliances with outside groups that have related interests.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

NYACD ANNUAL MEETING	2
NYACD RESOLUTIONS	2
NYACD 2007 AWARDS	3
UPPER SUSQUEHANNA COALITION	4
AEM AWARD	5
NEWS YOU CAN USE	6
EVENTS FROM HUDSON MOHAWK RC & D	7
UPCOMING EVENTS	8

NYACD ANNUAL MEETING

We're headed to the Southern Tier. The NYACD Annual Meeting for 2007 will be held Sunday, October 28, through Tuesday, October 30, at the Owego Treadway Inn, on the banks of the Susquehanna River in Tioga County.



The theme of this year's meeting is "Crossroads". Our purpose is to help you, as directors, make the right decisions for your Districts during a time when many of us face new and difficult challenges. NRCS is experiencing a major reorganization; the 2007 Farm Bill is under construction; development pressures are continuing to impact the agricultural community and the land and water resources of all of our citizens.

Challenges can create opportunities. This meeting will be structured to provide training and information you can use to address the issues before your District. It will also give you the chance to visit with other directors and members of our partner organizations to share ideas and experiences.

The committee that has been assembled to prepare for the Annual meeting is looking for your input. If there are specific issues and needs you would like addressed, now is the time to let us know. Please contact Mary Beth Goodwin (mgoodwi1@rochester.rr.com or 585-398-2817) or one of the committee members: Brad Rogers and Bob Aman of NYACD; Barb Silvestri, Les Travis and John Schumacher of the State Committee; Jeff Parker, Velynda Risley and Blanche Delaney of the Employees' Association; and Mark Grennan of NRCS.

We look forward to seeing you in Owego this fall.

NYACD RESOLUTIONS - 2007

It is time for resolutions to be prepared for the NYACD annual meeting set for **October 28, 2007**. This resolution process gives us, District Directors, a means for setting the agenda for NYACD in regards to legislation and many other issues of concern to you, our district members. We accomplished a lot with our state legislature this past year. Are there other issues we need to raise with them? What about the Federal government, especially the new **FARM BILL** ?

Have you had concerns and problems with the current federal programs and want to see them changed? Does NRCS have enough technical and engineering staff to help deliver the federal programs?? **Speak now, or forever hold your peace.**

Please discuss these issues and any other concerns you may have at your next board meeting and prepare resolutions for NYACD. Division meetings should also be held in the next couple of months to address resolutions as well as regional issues. **This should include accessing the new State funding that is now available.**

We also need District Directors for Regions 7 and 8!!! We have been making this request for 2 years. Is there no one willing to step up to the plate?????

Resolution Deadlines are:

1. Local Soil & Water Conservation Districts discuss issues for NYACD action. Resolutions are drafted and submitted by **September 1st**.
2. Division meetings are held to discuss issues for NYACD action. Resolutions are drafted and submitted by **September 30th**.
3. The Resolutions Committee meets, reviews, collates the submitted resolutions and distributes the 2007 resolution package to districts by **October 1st**.
4. Local Soil & Water Conservation Districts review and discuss the 2007 resolutions prior to the NYACD Annual Meeting on **October 28th, 2007**.
5. Resolutions are voted on by the District Directors (one per district) at the NYACD Annual Meeting.

If you have any questions or problems, please call George Proios or Gregg Bell.



New York Association of Conservation Districts, Inc.

2007 AWARDS ANNOUNCEMENT

Commendation Award

Recognizes a District or agency employee for superior professional achievement. The activities assist, promote, and advance the programs of SWCDs, or NYACD or the wise use and management of soil, water and related natural resources. The activities are performed in a professional manner, with a high degree of skill and high quality. The activity serves as an example of good conservation and development of natural resources and /or contributes to a better understanding of conservation districts. The award may be given for recent or sustained activity.

Merit Award

To recognize a SWCD director, RC&D Council Member, or NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee member (voting or advisory) for outstanding effort or activity that promotes and advances district or RC&D programs. The activity clearly contributes to a better program and/or better understanding of natural resource conservation. The activity has been instrumental in the development or implementation of district or RC&D programs. The activity required unusual time or effort. The award may be given for recent or sustained activity.

Special Service Award

To recognize a person, agency organization or firm for special services to conservation districts or the Association. The nominee should have performed special services or activities that significantly helped districts or the Association more effectively carry out their objectives or programs. The activity may have been performed recently or for sustained support or services.

Distinguished Service Award

To recognize an Association Division or Officer for Distinguished service to the Association. The activities promote and advance the objective, policies and programs of the Association. The activities, marked by distinction, have been recent or sustained. There is no limit to the number of times this award may be given to an individual. The candidate must be nominated by an Association committee or member of the Board. Nominations should include a narrative to document the specific accomplishments of the nominee.

Diversity Award

To recognize conservation district service Activities of the SWCD exhibit a diversity of board, a variety of service to all constituent groups, diversity of programs, employee diversity. The district must also demonstrate efforts to improve or continue efforts to carry out conservation in a wide array of manners. State winner will be nominated in the NACD awards program.

Kitchen Sink Award (Appreciation Award)

No this is not the official award name, but many times we hear that this radio show, or media, or farmer or educator or legislator etc. has provided a service to not just the SWCD but to the conservation ethics that we hold dear. This award(s) is to recognize those efforts.

All nominations must be received in the NYACD office no later than September 30, 2007
518-461-3566, NYACD@nycap.rr.com

Nominators should submit a narrative plus any support material to clearly document the specific accomplishments of the nominee.

THE UPPER SUSQUEHANNA COALITION

The Upper Susquehanna Coalition (USC) is a group of natural resource professionals working toward improving water quality in the Upper Susquehanna River basin. The group formed in 1992 with 14 initial members representing local Water Quality Coordinating Committees. Working under the premise that watershed planning and implementation should be performed on a watershed scale, that boundaries should be topographical and not political, the group established a unique cooperative structure crossing county and state lines.

In 1996 a Watershed Coordinator was hired. Since then the staff of the Coalition has grown to range between 10-15 employees, depending on the season, and millions of dollars of competitively won grant funds have been generated. Those dollars have contributed to successful reductions in non-point source pollution.

A structural re-organization took place in 2007, when a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by 16 Soil and Water Conservation Districts in New York, and 3 Conservation Districts from PA, making it a unique district led entity. The USC is governed by an Executive Committee, and produces results through the Outreach and Implementation Committees. Sound partnerships with the NYS DEC, NYS FWS, US EPA, academia (Binghamton University, Water Resources Institute, Cornell University, SUNY Oneonta Biological Field Station) and numerous other agencies round out the organization.

The USC strives to improve water quality, habitat, and to reduce the effects of flooding in programs that benefit both the community and the environment. A multiple barrier approach (source reduction across the landscape, in the stream corridor and programmatically through education, outreach, and training) is responsible for a great deal of what the Coalition has achieved. This approach supports resident-based small watershed organizations, and provides opportunities for municipal officials to train and gather additional information and implementation techniques to address local non-point issues.

Improving database efficiency through GIS is also high on the list of priorities. Documenting farm assessments, inventories and BMPs, wetlands, road ditch inventories and all land use information in member counties is an ongoing process in USC data management.

Implementation of BMP's is the driving force in the Coalition. The USC has a wetland program responsible for restoration/remediation of nearly 400 acres of wetlands since 1992, and has documented a total 7,649 acres restored throughout the watershed. There are an additional 3344 acres now in the planning stages. Mapping road ditches, planting riparian buffers on land that may not qualify under other agency programs, implementing natural stream design practices and modeling and monitoring are all continual initiatives of the USC and partners.

The USC is persistently searching for innovative practices to reduce nutrients. Precision feeding and forage management – an interesting but complex BMP, is currently being studied by the USC and Cornell University. The Coalition also supports prescribed grazing – grass based agriculture for true farm sustainability.

In the year 2000 Governor Pataki agreed that New York would work with the other states in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed to improve water quality in the Bay by 2010. The USC was an obvious partner in attempting to reach these goals. The NYSDEC and the USC have written a Tributary Strategy outlining how New York will reduce the amount of nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment leaving its borders. This strategy and the impairment of the Bay have raised awareness of non-point source issues.

The success of the Coalition can be traced to the dedication of its members. Working together for the greater good has molded the group into an efficient entity that completes environmentally sound projects in relatively short periods of time, with limited funds. As a leader in working cooperatively, The USC stands as an example of what can be accomplished when various agencies develop a network that accentuates each unique ability to focus on environmental goals.

By Erin Heard, Tributary Strategy Specialist with the Upper Susquehanna Coalition

COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCES AGRICULTURAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AWARD

Wyoming County Farm Family Recognized for Exceptional Stewardship Efforts

New York State Agriculture Commissioner Patrick Hooker today announced the recipients of the 2007 Agricultural Environmental Management Award, which honors farm families and their county Soil and Water Conservation District for exceptional stewardship efforts.

The Jeffres Family of R.L. Jeffres & Sons, Inc. in Covington and the Wyoming County Soil and Water Conservation District received this year's Agricultural Environmental Management Award. The award presentation was made by the Commissioner at the 74th annual Empire Farm Days in Seneca Falls.

"When you live off the land, there is no greater resource than the soil and water that surrounds your business," the Commissioner said. "Farmers recognize that fact and work diligently to not only produce a healthy product for all to consume, but to protect our environment for all to enjoy. Congratulations to the Jeffres family and the Wyoming County Soil and Water Conservation District. Because of your hard work and conscious efforts in protecting New York's precious resources, we are all winners today."

This recognition is awarded annually to a farm family that practices sound agricultural stewardship by incorporating Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) into the operation of their farm business. The county Soil and Water Conservation District is also recognized for their important role providing necessary technical assistance and resources.

R.L. Jeffres & Sons, Inc. is owned by Robert L. and Shirley Jeffres and is a 7,800 acre cash crop farm that grows corn, peas, dry beans, snap beans, beets, carrots, alfalfa and wheat. In 2006, they started growing organic corn, soybeans and snap beans. The farm has been in operation since 1914 and currently has the third, fourth and fifth generations involved on the farm.

The fourth generation of Jeffres, which includes brothers James, Daniel and Thomas Jeffres, along with their sister Cathleen Penders, operates the farm today. This family has a long-standing commitment to natural resource conservation and water quality protection on their farm. The Jeffres believe that it is important to maintain soil composition and preserve the environment.

The Jeffres were the first farmers in Wyoming County to sign a cooperators agreement with the county Soil and Water Conservation District back in 1941 and were also one of the first farms to participate in the AEM Program. "The family is always working to maintain and improve their soil and water conservation practices," said District Manager Greg McKurth. "Over the years, they have implemented a tremendous number of conservation practices to protect their farm's natural resources."

The Jeffres have planted cover crops, installed strip crops, diversion ditches and over 100 miles of drainage tile to minimize soil erosion and nutrient runoff. They follow the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program that encourages scouting and assessing pests, which limits the amount of pesticides used on crops. The Jeffres have also installed more than 30 acres of vegetative buffer strips along streams to protect water quality.

The Jeffres are also part owners in a 2,000 cow dairy farm, which provides a source of organic nutrients for their crop land helping to save on fertilizer costs. They have completed a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan for the dairy, which is used to help conserve soil, recycle nutrients and manage their farm business in harmony with the environment.

John Vogel, Editor of the American Agriculturist, said, "The Jeffres family are superb proof that even larger-scale family farms can have a high regard for the environment. They clearly understand that preserving soil and water quality is crucial today so their families can prosper in the tomorrows to come."

Melanie Wickham, Executive Secretary for Empire Potato Growers Inc., said, "Farmers have always been the best environmental stewards and it is exciting for the Empire State Potato Growers to be a part of recognizing farmers for their long-standing commitment."

The Jeffres are active members of their community, serving in the County Farm Bureau, Cooperative Extension and Chamber of Commerce. They are also local sponsors for various athletic, youth and civic organizations, including the Boy Scouts, the Red Cross, the local fire department, and community hospital.

New York's AEM program serves as a national model of how a voluntary, incentive-based approach can successfully result in protecting and enhancing the State's soil and water resources, while meeting the economic needs of our diverse agricultural industry. The AEM partnership of local, state and federal agencies, environmental groups, businesses and farmers, provides the technical, educational and financial assistance to develop and implement sound conservation plans.

The Agricultural Environmental Management Award is jointly sponsored by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, American Agriculturist Magazine and the Empire State Potato Growers. The award winner was chosen from nominees submitted by County Soil and Water Conservation Districts from around the State.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

AEM Media Workshops for Farmers & AEM Partners

The workshops will be geared to issues faced by farmers and AEM partners when responding to media requests, answering questions during town meetings, etc. The session will be taught by our professional media training team including the top TV news anchor from a leading station in the Syracuse market, and the top spokespersons for the dairy industry and environmental issues in New York State.

If you have not yet attended a media workshop, please consider taking this opportunity to learn important techniques that will help you be a better communicator. If you have attended previous sessions, this is a great opportunity to move to the next level of training, hone your skills, and get new tips!

<u>Saratoga County</u>	Tuesday, October 23, 2007	11 AM - 4 PM
Saratoga County Building # 5, 50 West High St., Ballston Spa N.Y. 12020		
<u>Jefferson County</u>	Thursday, November 1, 2007	11 AM - 4 PM
First Pioneer Farm Credit, 25417 Rt. 12 South, Watertown, N.Y. 13601		
<u>Livingston County</u>	Wednesday, November 7, 2007	11 AM - 4 PM
Genesee River Restaurant, 134 North Main St., Mount Morris, N.Y. 14510		

To register or for more details, please email Barbara Silvestri at barb.silvestri@agmkt.state.ny.us, or call 518-461-6843.

Check out the New NACD Website!

NACD has recently launched its newly designed website. The new site features a fresh design and structure as well as new content. One big change is the site's primary navigation bar, which now appears across the top of every page and divides the site into five major sections:

- Home, which gives visitors an overview of NACD and conservation districts and provides contact information;
- News and Events, where you can find the most recent events and news items as well as information on upcoming events and award nominations along with archives of past news releases and publications;
- District Resources, which houses information and useful district tools like guides, PowerPoint presentations, special reports, web hosting information and more;
- Stewardship & Education, which contains information regarding Stewardship Week 2008, contests, NACD Marketplace and education resources; and
- Conservation Policy, where information is available regarding all testimony and input NACD has submitted as well as information regarding natural resource policy issues with which NACD is involved, including the 2007 Farm Bill.

U.S. House of Representatives Passes Historic Farm Bill

On July 27th, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a new Farm Bill that makes historic investments in fruit and vegetable production, conservation, nutrition and renewable energy while maintaining a strong safety net for America's farmers and ranchers.

The House of Representatives passed the 2007 Farm Bill (H.R. 2419) by a vote of 231- 191. The Senate must now consider the Farm Bill. The 2002 Farm Bill expires on September 30, 2007.

The U.S. House Committee on Agriculture web site <http://agriculture.house.gov> has additional information on this and other subjects.

NYACD ANNUAL AWARDS

It is that time of the year again. What time? Well not the time to plow snow nor the time to go skiing or skating. You are close if you say it is time to think about how you will dress up for Halloween. It is the time to starting thinking about attending the NYACD Annual Meeting in Owego this year.

It is also time to think about identifying outstanding individuals and districts that have provided outstanding service to the soil and water conservation districts, partners and to those we service.

NYACD annually sponsors an awards and recognition program to show our appreciation and to recognize those who provide these outstanding services. These awards are presented during the NYACD annual meeting.

PLEASE, PLEASE take the time today to make nominations for these awards. (See Page 3) By Linda Coffin

HUDSON MOHAWK RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, INC



1024 State Route 66
Ghent, NY 12075

Web: www.nyrkd.org/hudsonmohawk

Phone: (518) 828-4385

Fax: (518) 828-0166

Email: hudsonmohawkrkd@hotmail.com

Promoting regional, economic, and natural resource conservation development in Albany, Columbia, Greene, Montgomery, Rensselaer, and Schenectady Counties.

Upcoming Events Sponsored By Hudson Mohawk RC&D Council and Its Partners - Fall 2007

“HOOF TO RAIL” WORKSHOP FOR LIVESTOCK FARMERS: Saturday, September 15th, SUNY Cobleskill Meat Lab, 8:30 – 4:00. This workshop will include information for livestock owners on grazing, determining an animal’s readiness for market, how to price meat, and meat identification. See enclosed flyer for more information. Cost is \$25. Please register by September 10th by calling Kathleen Harris at (518) 673-5193 or email nelpsc@frontiernet.net. Made possible with funding from the NY Farm Viability Institute.

GRAZING WORKSHOP AND PASTURE WALK FOR DAIRY AND LIVESTOCK: Tuesday, October 9th from 12:00 – 3:30 at the Sheffer’s Grassland Dairy, 74 Sheffer Road, Hoosick Falls (Rensselaer County). Dr. Darrell Emmick from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service will be giving a presentation on “Behavior Based Grazing Management: Factors that Influence Dry Matter Intake.” The presentation will be followed by a pasture walk led by farm owners Wally Sheffer and his son Eric. Eric, a Cornell University student, gained additional grazing experience while studying in New Zealand last year. Barbecue lunch will be provided. Co-Sponsored by the Rensselaer County Soil and Water Conservation District and the USDA NRCS. The workshop is free but please pre-register by calling the District at (518) 271-1740. Made possible with funding from the NYS Grazing Land Conservation Initiative.

NORTHEAST SMALL FARM AND RURAL LIVING EXPO: Saturday and Sunday, October 13th & 14th, Ulster County Fair Grounds, New Paltz, NY. Adult admission is \$5 per day, Children 5-14 is \$2 per day, and children under 5 are free. The expo will feature over 50 educational workshops including an array of hands-on demonstrations, a variety of children’s learning activities, and a large exhibit hall with businesses and agencies who work with farms and rural communities to answer a wide range of questions. In addition to lectures, there will be farm animals, antique farm equipment exhibits, blacksmith demonstrations, carriage rides, gardening workshops, and more. For more information visit www.smallfarmexpo.org.

GRAZING WORKSHOP FOR HORSE OWNERS: Thursday, October 25th 6:00 – 9:00 PM at the Red Hook Firehouse, 42 Firehouse Lane (Dutchess County). Dr. Darrell Emmick from the USDA NRCS will be speaking on “Getting the Most Out of Your Pastures for Your Horse” and will include information on pasture management, rotational grazing, weed control, and what to plant in the pasture. Rob DeClue, from the Chenango County Soil and Water Conservation District, will demonstrate the proper way to set up and test an electric fence ground return system. Co-sponsored by the Columbia County Soil and Water Conservation District, USDA NRCS, and Mac’s Farm & Garden World, Agway. Made possible with funding from the NYS Grazing Land Conservation Initiative. The program is free and includes light refreshments and door prizes. For more information, call the Red Hook Agway at (845) 758-3601.

NEW YORK ASSOCIATION OF
CONSERVATION DISTRICTS, INC.

NYACD, Inc.
HRC 335E, HVCC
80 Vandenberg Avenue
Troy, NY 12180

Phone: 518-629-7645
Fax: 518-629-7646
E-mail: NYACD@nycap.rr.com
Web: www.nyacd.org

CHECK IT OUT!

WWW.NYACD.ORG



PROVIDING TODAY...
... PROTECTING TOMORROW

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
MAILED FROM ZIP CODE 14424
PERMIT NO. 335

Return Service Requested

UPCOMING EVENTS



- **NYACD Annual Meeting**, Owego, NY, October 28– 30, 2007
- **“Hoof to Rail” Workshop**, SUNY Cobleskill, September 15, 2007
- **NY State Committee Meeting**, Albany, NY, September 18, 2007
- **NYACD Award Nominations Deadline**, September 30, 2007
- **Grazing Workshop for Dairy & Livestock**, Rensselaer County, October 9, 2007
- **NE Small Farm & Rural Living Expo**, New Paltz, NY, October 13 & 14, 2007
- **Grazing Workshop for Horse Owners**, Dutchess County, October 25, 2007
- **AEM Media Workshops:**
 - October 23, 2007, Saratoga County
 - November 1, 2007, Jefferson County
 - November 7, 2007, Livingston County

September FYI—Deadline for Articles —August 31, 2007.

Please send articles to Maggie Atkins at matkins@frontiernet.net; Phone: 585-396-9973; Fax: 585-554-4077. **Thanks.**